

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE WATER COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16, 2012 in the West Annex Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Deemer, Lefevre, McCabe*,
Nishinaga*, See, and Chairperson McGee.

Absent: Commissioner Haddon.

Also Present: Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden,
Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich,
Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt,
Water Quality Inspector Molina, and
Metropolitan Water District Director Wright.

*Commissioner McCabe arrived at 7:12 p.m.; Commissioner Nishinaga arrived at 8:13 p.m.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Lefevre led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner See moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 2012

Postponed to the March 15, 2012 Commission meeting.

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

**8A. PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVE OF SIERRA CLUB - LA CHAPTER
REGARDING THEIR WATER CONSERVATION SCORECARD AND RELATED
ISSUES**

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich introduced the item and welcomed George Watland, Project Coordinator for the Water Conservation Scorecard developed by the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Mr. Watland provided background on the Sierra Club and activities of the Angeles Chapter that includes 40,000 members of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. He stated that water issues have been important to the Chapter since the 1970's and recently has focused on water conservation measures. He reported that three years ago a committee was formed to review ordinances in the 122 cities incorporated in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. He stated that cities were ranked for measures in their ordinances in 2009-2010 that address appropriate water use, avoid water waste, improve building standards, and prescribe water-efficient business practices. He described the ranking criteria and matrix that was developed to evaluate and compare the viability of conservation programs implemented by local agencies in those cities. He stated that the survey was finished in mid-2011 and led to a color-coded map and scorecard, noting that Torrance received a score of 10 or a "good" rating.

He reported that 19 criteria were collected for Restricted Use and Efficient Use water conservation measures. He stated that MWD put out a model water conservation ordinance and most cities, including Torrance, incorporated that model into their ordinances. He noted that most cities received the highest score for Restricted Use measures. He discussed these measures that include limiting lawn watering and washing vehicles as well as requiring leaks to be reported. He described Efficient Use standards that include low-flow showerheads and toilets, efficient washing machines and dishwashers, and irrigation controllers. He explained scores for Residential Water Efficiency, Efficient Landscape Irrigation, Efficient Commercial Processes, and Efficient Municipal Best Practices.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich pointed out that many water conservation measures and programs are not included in the City's Conservation Ordinance but are incorporated in the Water Use Efficiency Study coming forward in another two months. He added that other City documents mandate recycled water use and described recycled water used by Mobil Oil and 35 landscape sites.

In response to Commissioner Lefevre's inquiry, Mr. Watland stated that the Committee looked at standards for new building permits but pointed out that two cities had mandatory retrofits on resale properties.

Responding to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, he advised that no other Sierra Club Chapters in California have developed a similar scorecard yet.

MWD Director Wright stated that MWD is in the process of developing a two-year budget based on selling 1.7 million acre-feet of water instead of the 2 to 2.2 million acre-feet they used to sell. He noted that MWD is likely to increase rates 10% the first year and 5% the next year, adding that MWD is applying for a grant for turf replacement and air-cooled ice machine programs.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich stated that Torrance Municipal Water has applied for a grant for a "rain garden" program that converts parts of front lawns with California friendly landscapes that would serve as demonstration models. He also discussed the grant for a feasibility study to expand the Goldsworthy Desalter.

Mr. Watland stated that the Chapter is interested in what cities are doing to encourage recycled water use and other conservation measures that have proved to be effective.

Commissioner McCabe suggested that the City take the lead on water conservation and inquired about action steps that the City could take to improve its rating.

Mr. Watland stated that the first action step would center on how the green building code is being implemented and also how to increase use of recycled water. He recommended that the Commission look at which provisions the City implements in building code standards for residential, commercial, industrial, and irrigation.

Commissioner Lefevre stated that only basing the criteria on cities' ordinances is too shallow and should have taken other measures into consideration.

Mr. Watland encouraged Commissioners to get involved with the Sierra Club and its online Water Forum.

8B. VIDEO AND PRESENTATION REGARDING MAINTAINING THE SAFETY OF THE POTABLE WATER SUPPLY THROUGH A CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL AND BACKFLOW PREVENTION PROGRAM

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden introduced Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt and Senior Water Quality Inspector Molina from the Public Works Department who provided a presentation on the Cross-Connection Control program.

With the aid of slides, Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt reported on reasons for backflow protection of drinking water. He defined Cross Connection, Backsiphonage, Backpressure, and a backflow device that is any device that has been approved to prevent backflow or backsiphonage into the public drinking water supply. He noted that the Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research at USC provides certification of approved backflow prevention equipment and training for personnel to perform program monitoring, inspections, and repairs. He stated that there are over 540 backflow devices in the City and that they need to be tested once per year for compliance.

Responding to Chairperson McGee's inquiry, he stated that most backflow devices are located in parks, businesses, hospitals, and anywhere there is potential for a backflow condition. He added that the type of backflow assembly is matched to the application and potential hazard, noting that air gaps provide the best protection.

He showed a 12-minute video developed by USC's Foundation that explains how backflow devices such as vacuum breakers and air gaps work as well as providing information about standards, impartial approval, regular inspections, and training.

Senior Water Quality Inspector Molina provided additional information about the Cross-Connection Control program. He stated that testers are Los Angeles County certified and must be trained and certified to test backflow prevention assemblies. He noted that specialists must be able to conduct surveys, assess the degree of hazards, and determine the appropriate protection needed. He stated that defensible and

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detailed records are kept to insure a successful and trouble free program and discussed tools to identify potential and actual cross connections that include plan checks, building permits, and site surveys.

Commissioner Deemer inquired how often the devices have to be replaced and was informed that some have lasted more than 50 years although finding replacement parts can be challenging.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden pointed out that TMW is responsible for protecting the public water system while Los Angeles County Department of Health is responsible for checking backflow devices within or on private property.

At Commissioner Deemer's request, staff described the troubleshooting procedure and pressure tests that are conducted should a device fail.

Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt stated that the backflow ordinance is being updated and will be brought back for the Commission's review in a few months.

9. METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MWD Director Wright provided an update on MWD's current Water Supply Conditions. He reported that overall the State water supply is 32% of normal as of February 12 which matches the driest year on record, 1977. He stated that Donner Summit snowpack is 37% of normal and Mammoth Pass is 20% of normal. Referring to the Colorado River supply, he stated that the Upper Colorado Basin snowpack is 72% of normal. However, because there was so much precipitation last year, MWD was able to move and store a lot of water and does not foresee any shortages.

In response to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, he stated that there are no significant reservoirs north of Lake Powell.

Responding to Commissioner Nishinaga's inquiry, MWD Director Wright stated that there is a chance of recovery, recalling the March "miracle" in 1977. He mentioned that they are doing some cloud seeding in Wyoming.

He encouraged Commissioners to participate on the Bay Delta water inspection trip on April 26-27, 2012.

10. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden reported that Mark Stewart, the Water Master, spoke at the February 7, 2012 West Basin Water Association meeting about his approval of a non-consumptive use permit requested by Shell Oil to clean up a contaminated site. He noted that the Association is objecting to this decision and is asking him to revisit it. He reported that the Water Master also announced that West Coast Basin pumped 3,800 acre feet in December 2011, a 5-1/2% decrease from December 2010 but an overall 5% increase for the water year.

He reported that West Basin Municipal Water District announced that its Phase 5 expansion of the Edward Little facility is 25% complete and that they are conducting a desalination study. He reported on MWD's budget, rate increases, and the possibility of

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replenishment water tiered structure. He reported that Water Replenishment District (WRD) is working on a master plan for their Water Independence Now (WIN) program, announced its annual Groundwater Festival in Lakewood on March 17, 2012, and were able to put 33,000 acre feet in the ground for replenishment, 20,000 of which was captured.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden provided an update on the conjunctive use issue that is going to the California State Supreme Court. He mentioned that there was a quarterly general membership meeting on February 15, 2012 that included a presentation by attorney Stephanie Hastings.

11. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden noted that the Monthly Department Report for January 2012 was included in agenda packets. He reported that total water production in January 2012 was 1% higher than January 2011 and potable water production also increased by approximately 3%. He reported that there were seven water main breaks but overall there is a drastic decrease compared to years past. He stated that they are averaging 150 acre feet per month from the Goldsworthy Desalter and approximately 2,000 to 2,400 acre feet per year from Well Number 9.

MOTION: Commissioner See moved to accept and file the Monthly Department Report for January 2012. Commissioner Nishinaga seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Haddon).

12. ORALS

12A. Commissioners and staff welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Nishinaga.

12B. Commissioner McCabe asked that an item on the green building code and ways the City can demonstrate leadership in water conservation be placed on a future agenda.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:30 p.m., Commissioner McCabe moved to adjourn the meeting to March 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission meeting room. Commissioner See seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson McGee so ordered.

Approved as Submitted March 15, 2012 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
